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Maryland National Guard Deploys Additional Troops to Assist With Katrina Relief Efforts

Military Police to be Transported to Louisiana by Maryland Air National Guard C-130Js

ANNAPOLIS - Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. today authorized the deployment of an additional 65 soldiers from the Maryland National Guard's 29th Military Police Company to assist the State of Louisiana with its relief effort in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The soldiers, who were requested by Louisiana Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, will perform security duties as required.

"This is an extremely difficult time for the citizens of the Gulf Coast, and as such, we must continue to do all we can to help ease their suffering," said Governor Ehrlich. "The Maryland National Guard will continue to make its resources available throughout this crisis wherever and whenever it's needed."

The request was made under the provision of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, an agreement between 49 states and two territories to provide resources to each other when disasters strike. It was coordinated through the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, a branch of the Maryland Military Department.

Today's deployment brings the total number of deployed Maryland Army and Air National Guardsmen in the affected region to nearly 200.

Today's deployment also brings to five the total number of flights flown in support of the relief effort by the Maryland Air National Guard's 135th Airlift Group and its eight state-of-the-art C-130J's. The 135th Airlift Group and associated units of the Maryland Air

National Guard's 175th Wing are anticipating additional flights throughout the next several days at a minimum of two flights per day.

This latest group of soldiers, as was the case earlier this week with the initial group of deployed Maryland Army and Air Guardsmen, are combat veterans who served in Afghanistan, and provided security at the Pentagon within days of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

The troops will depart today at 2 p.m. from Warfield Air National Guard Base at the Martin State Airport in Middle River, Md. The Guardsmen and their equipment will be transported to Louisiana by C-130J aircraft from the 135th Airlift Group of the Maryland Air National Guard.

The Maryland Air National Guard is comprised of a State Headquarters in Baltimore, the 175th Wing at Martin State airport and its two flying units and support staff - the 104th Fighter Squadron (A-10) and the 135th Airlift Squadron (C-130J). More than 1,600 full-time and traditional members are employed by the Maryland Air National Guard, contributing nearly \$80 million annually to Maryland's economy. The Air National Guard represents more than one-third of the total United States Air Force's total structure. Under the Total Force Policy, the Air National Guard, the Air Force Reserve and the active United States Air Force are full partners in protecting the United States and its interests at home and abroad.

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